

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 627

By Bone

A RESOLUTION to honor and celebrate the 90th anniversary of
the First Presbyterian Church of Lebanon.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pleasure in paying tribute to the dedicated members of those exemplary religious organizations who, through their hard work and dedication, have stood the test of time to serve as examples for present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the First Presbyterian Church of Lebanon is most assuredly one such extraordinary group of people who are deserving of special praise and commendation; and

WHEREAS, this year, the church's congregation will celebrate 90 years of positive influence in Lebanon and the many different mission points by which they have helped to carry the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, the celebration will be a time of reflecting on the past, giving thanks for the present, and eagerly anticipating the future; and

WHEREAS, the First Presbyterian Church of Lebanon has weathered the storms of life for nearly a century and is still pressing toward the attainment of the higher calling of God in Christ Jesus; and

WHEREAS, the First Presbyterian Church building has the great distinction of being the oldest church building in Lebanon that is still being used for Christian worship and service; and

WHEREAS, the church was originally founded in 1829 as a Cumberland Presbyterian Church and initially consisted of seven women led by Pastor George Donnell; and

WHEREAS, in 1906, a movement began to reunite the Cumberland Presbyterian Church with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.; the two churches were previously divided during the American Civil War and later merged to form the First Presbyterian Church U.S.A. in Lebanon; and

WHEREAS, after the union, the First Presbyterian Church outgrew its facilities, and so, ground for the present sanctuary was broken in 1910 with a ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone; and

WHEREAS, a lot on the corner of South Greenwood Street and West Main Street was approved for the new building, and construction began in April of 1910; and

WHEREAS, the popular Akron Plan design, with the typical corner tower and diagonal seating in the sanctuary, was used to allow for maximum seating. At one time, the First Presbyterian Church building had the largest seating capacity of any sanctuary in Lebanon because of this practical arrangement; and

WHEREAS, another unique aspect of the church is the carpeting; the original carpet, laid in 1911, was replaced in 1956, duplicating the color and the pattern of the original; and

WHEREAS, a breathtaking feature of the building is the ornate stained-glass windows. Made from glass bought from the Chicago Art Glass Co., the ten windows are of a Tiffany design depicting various scriptures from the Bible; and

WHEREAS, one popular attraction of the church is the cross located in the sanctuary, which is an original piece of art by one of America's foremost artists, Bill Heaton; the cross is considered to be one of the most valuable pieces of art in the community and was given to the First Presbyterian Church in 1965; and

WHEREAS, the First Presbyterian Church is also home to a pipe organ designed by Tennessean, W.P. Bradberry, in 1955; like all pipe organs, this massive instrument was hand built and contains hundreds of reeds inside the swell chamber that vary in size from a couple of inches to 16 feet long; and

WHEREAS, attracting visitors and entertaining residents from all over the community is the church's 25 bronze church bells located inside the top room of the bell tower. The bells all come from the Royal Eijbouts Foundry in Asten, Holland, and were given as memorials of past church members. Ranging in weight from 75 pounds to 950 pounds each, the bells provide two octaves and can play over 25 songs from a diskette. The bells chime the hour and half-hour between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. every Monday through Saturday, in addition to providing a mini-concert of three songs at noon and 6:00 p.m. and calling members to worship five minutes before each service; and

WHEREAS, 90 years later, the First Presbyterian Church stands today as a welcoming fellowship, striving to be faithful in worship, discipleship, and reaching into the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, for 90 years, this blessed church and its congregation have grown and prospered as an institution of time-honored family values and selfless love; and

WHEREAS, the past has been good to the First Presbyterian Church of Lebanon, and the future promises continued blessings for the good people who comprise the membership of the church's congregation; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations such as the First Presbyterian Church of Lebanon are truly the rock-solid foundation upon which our society is built and a beacon of sanity and continuity in these turbulent times, and the members of this fine congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and to the good people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, That we hereby pause to honor and congratulate the congregation at the First Presbyterian Church of Lebanon on the celebration of its 90th anniversary and extend to them our best wishes for every future happiness in service to the Lord.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.